

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA**

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LITIGATION

No. 0:18-cv-01776-JRT-HB

**JOINT STATUS REPORT FOR
THE APRIL 11, 2019 STATUS
CONFERENCE**

This Document Relates To:

All Actions

Pursuant to the Court's Order set out in its Minutes dated January 28, 2019 (Dkt. 264), the parties in these cases submit this joint status report regarding the April 11, 2019 status conference.

GENERAL STATUS

Since the last status conference before the Court, the parties have been complying with the Court's orders. The relevant parties have completed and served their ESI Disclosures and Defendants have served their initial responses and objections to the agreed-upon subset of Plaintiffs' document requests. The parties expect to begin the meet and confer process shortly regarding Defendants' custodians and responses and objections after Plaintiffs complete their review.

Plaintiffs' Further Statement

Plaintiffs anticipate that this process can be completed within 60 days and any disputes can be presented to the Court thereafter. Plaintiffs request that the Court set a deadline for each Defendant to propose an initial set of document custodians, then a subsequent deadline for Plaintiffs to make any counter-proposals. A final deadline should then be set for resolving issues regarding document custodians and raising any disputes with the Court in a timely manner.

Plaintiffs also note a concern regarding the preservation of phone records in the possession of phone carriers of Defendants' potential custodians. While a handful of the senior most executives phone devices were addressed last fall, there are likely to be numerous other document custodians' whose phone records will be relevant. At present, only one Defendant has produced relevant phone numbers (cell, office, etc.) for their

relevant employees. Plaintiffs need to ensure that phone records of potential document custodians are being preserved given the rolling destruction of phone records by phone carriers. Plaintiffs have learned in prior cases the best way to avoid destruction of phone record evidence is for the parties to disclose relevant phone numbers for potential document custodians, then ensure the relevant phone carrier is contacted for each such phone number.

Plaintiffs believe that the April 11, 2019 conference should be conducted in person but a telephone conference line be made available for attorneys who wish to appear telephonically. If it would assist the Court, Plaintiffs are able to provide a dial in number for such a call.

Defendants' Further Statement

Consistent with the Court's Orders, Defendants are prepared to discuss their written responses and objections to the agreed sub-set of document requests and to propose document custodians. The parties have not yet met and conferred regarding these issues. Until such time as Plaintiffs articulate their concerns, if any, with Defendants' responses, however, they cannot pre-judge the amount of time it will take to resolve those concerns/negotiate them to impasse.¹

Defendants do not agree, however, that bringing any unresolved disputes regarding document requests or custodians that may remain after the parties meet and confer to the

¹ The first time Plaintiffs raised their proposal of 60 days to resolve disputes over their requests for production and for the Court to set deadlines for identifying document custodians was today. As such, the Defendants have not had any opportunity to meaningfully consider Plaintiffs' proposal, nor have the parties had any opportunity to meet and confer. Defendants believe it would be a more efficient use of the parties' and the Court's resources to confer on these issues first before raising them with the Court.

Court's attention prior to the resolution of the motion to dismiss is appropriate or practicable under the circumstances. As the Court recognized in its Order (Dkt. 289), so as to "conserve[] resources and moderat[e] unfairness or prejudice," there should be "additional negotiations to refine the agreements and the parties' disclosures after the motions are resolved"—the Court specifically required negotiations, not motion practice. *See also* Dkt. 264 ("After Defendants serve the written objections and responses, the parties should meet and confer further.").

With respect to Plaintiffs' request for phone numbers, the Court has already ruled on this issue and held that the Defendants do not need to provide an expansive list of phone numbers to Plaintiffs. Specifically, during the Motion to Stay briefing, Plaintiffs attached to their Opposition their proposed "Disclosures of Information," where Plaintiffs sought "phone directories" including the "office, fax, and cellular number" of those individuals identified in Defendants' disclosures. (*See* Dkt. 205, at Ex. E, p. 7). In its Order, the Court revised Plaintiffs' proposed "Disclosures of Information" and *removed* the paragraph that called for this information. There is no basis to revisit this ruling. Moreover, Defendants have assured Plaintiffs and the Court, repeatedly, that they are complying with their document preservation obligations under the Federal Rules, including document preservation obligations as to phone records.

Given that the parties are cooperatively moving forward with the tasks laid out by the Court at the last status conference, Defendants suggested to Plaintiffs that the April 11, 2019 conference be conducted telephonically so as to save out-of-state counsel the cost and inconvenience of attending the conference in person. Plaintiffs instead insisted that the

conference be conducted in person, but said that they would not oppose a request for a telephone line to be made available. Defendants believe that an in-person conference is unnecessary and ask that the Court conduct the conference telephonically for all counsel so as not to prejudice out-of-state counsel.

* * * * *

In light of the foregoing, the parties do not anticipate making any further filings on Monday, April 4, 2019. *See* Dkt. 264 at 3 (requiring the parties to submit position statements regarding any disputes to be resolved at the status conference).

Dated: April 4, 2019

/s/ Bobby Pouya

Bruce L. Simon
PEARSON, SIMON & WARSHAW, LLP
44 Montgomery Street, Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94104
Telephone: (415) 433-9000
Facsimile: (415) 433-9008
bsimon@pswlaw.com

Clifford H. Pearson
Daniel L. Warshaw
Bobby Pouya
Michael H. Pearson
PEARSON SIMON & WARSHAW, LLP
15165 Ventura Boulevard, Suite 400
Sherman Oaks, CA 92403
Telephone: (818) 788-8300
Facsimile: (818) 788-8104
cpearson@pswlaw.com
dwarshaw@pswlaw.com
bpouya@pswlaw.com
mpearson@pswlaw.com

Melissa S. Weiner (MN #0387900)
Joseph C. Bourne (MN #0389922)
PEARSON, SIMON & WARSHAW, LLP
800 LaSalle Avenue, Suite 2150
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Telephone: (612) 389-0600
Facsimile: (612) 389-0610
mweiner@pswlaw.com
jbourne@pswlaw.com

W. Joseph Bruckner (MN #0147758)
Elizabeth R. Odette (MN #0340698)
Brian D. Clark (MN #0390069)
Simeon A. Morbey (MN #0391338)
Arielle S. Wagner (MN #0398332)
LOCKRIDGE GRINDAL NAUEN P.L.L.P.
100 Washington Avenue South, Suite 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55401
Telephone: (612) 339-6900
Facsimile: (612) 339-0981
wjbruckner@locklaw.com
erodette@locklaw.com
bdclark@locklaw.com
samorbey@locklaw.com
aswagner@locklaw.com

*Co-Lead Class Counsel for Direct Purchaser
Plaintiffs*

/s/ Daniel C. Hedlund

Daniel E. Gustafson (#202241)
Daniel C. Hedlund (#258337)
Michelle J. Looby (#388166)
Britany N. Resch (#0397656)
GUSTAFSON GLUEK PLLC
120 South 6th Street, Suite 2600
Minneapolis, MN 55402
Telephone: (612) 333-8844
Facsimile: (612) 339-6622
dgustafson@gustafsongluek.com
dhedlund@gustafsongluek.com
mlooby@gustafsongluek.com
bresch@gustafsongluek.com

Steve. W. Berman
Breanna Van Engelen
HAGENS BERMAN SOBOL SHAPIRO LLP
1301 2nd Avenue, Suite 2000
Seattle, WA 98101
Telephone: (206) 623-7292
Facsimile: (206) 623-0594
steve@hbsslaw.com
breannav@hbsslaw.com

Shana E. Scarlett
HAGENS BERMAN SOBOL SHAPIRO LLP
715 Hearst Avenue, Suite 202
Berkeley, CA 94710
Telephone: (510) 725-3000
Facsimile: (510) 725-3001
shanas@hbsslaw.com

Elizabeth A. Fegan
HAGENS BERMAN SOBOL SHAPIRO
455 N. Cityfront Plaza Drive, Ste 2410
Chicago, IL 60611
Telephone: (708) 628-4949
Facsimile: (708) 628-4950
beth@hbsslaw.com

*Co-Lead Counsel for Consumer Indirect
Purchaser Plaintiffs*

/s/ Jonathan W. Cuneo

Shawn M. Raiter (MN# 240424)
LARSON • KING, LLP
2800 Wells Fargo Place
30 East Seventh Street
St. Paul, MN 55101
Telephone: (651) 312-6518
sraiter@larsonking.com

Jonathan W. Cuneo
Joel Davidow
Blaine Finley
Yifei “Evelyn” Li
CUNEO GILBERT & LADUCA, LLP
4725 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20016
Telephone: (202) 789-3960
jonc@cuneolaw.com
joel@cuneolaw.com
bfinley@cuneolaw.com
evelyn@cuneolaw.com

*Co-Lead Counsel for Commercial and
Institutional Indirect Purchaser Plaintiffs*

/s/ Mark L. Johnson

Mark L. Johnson (#0345520)
Bethany Krueger (#0306368)
Virginia R. McCalmont (#0399496)
GREENE ESPEL PLLP
222 South Ninth Street, Suite 2200
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 373-0830
mjohnson@greeneespel.com
bkrueger@greeneespel.com
vmccalmont@greeneespel.com

Daniel Laytin, P.C. (*pro hac vice*)
Christa Cottrell, P.C. (*pro hac vice*)
Christina Briesacher (*pro hac vice*)
KIRKLAND & ELLIS LLP
300 North LaSalle
Chicago, IL 60654
(312) 861-2000
daniel.laytin@kirkland.com
christa.cottrell@kirkland.com
christina.briesacher@kirkland.com

*Counsel for Clemens Food Group, LLC
and The Clemens Family Corporation*

/s/ Richard A. Duncan

Richard A. Duncan (#0192983)
Aaron D. Van Oort (#0315539)
Craig S. Coleman (#0325491)
Emily E. Chow (#0388239)
Isaac B. Hall (#0395398)
Bryan K. Washburn (#0397733)
FAEGRE BAKER DANIELS LLP
2200 Wells Fargo Center
90 South Seventh Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402-3901
(612) 766-7000
richard.duncan@faegrebd.com
aaron.vanoort@faegrebd.com
craig.coleman@faegrebd.com
emily.chow@faegrebd.com
isaac.hall@faegrebd.com
bryan.washburn@faegrebd.com

*Counsel for Hormel Foods Corporation
and Hormel Foods, LLC*

/s/ Jaime Stilson

Jaime Stilson (#0392913)
DORSEY & WHITNEY LLP
50 South Sixth Street, Suite 1500
Minneapolis, MN 55402-1498
(612) 492-6746
stilson.jaime@dorsey.com

Britt M. Miller (*pro hac vice*)
Robert E. Entwisle (*pro hac vice*)
MAYER BROWN LLP
71 South Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606-4637
(312) 782-0600
bmiller@mayerbrown.com
rentwisle@mayerbrown.com

William H. Stallings (*pro hac vice*)
MAYER BROWN LLP
1999 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006-1101
(202) 263-3000
wstallings@mayerbrown.com

*Counsel for Indiana Packers Corporation
and Mitsubishi Corporation (Americas)*

/s/ Donald G. Heeman

Donald G. Heeman (#0286023)
Jessica J. Nelson (#0347358)
Randi J. Winter (#0391354)
SPENCER FANE
100 South Fifth Street, Suite 1900
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 268-7000
dheeman@spencerfane.com
jnelson@spencerfane.com
rwinter@spencerfane.com

Stephen R. Neuwirth (*pro hac vice*)
Michael B. Carlinsky (*pro hac vice*)
Sami H. Rashid (*pro hac vice*)
Richard T. Vagas (*pro hac vice*)
Robert P. Vance, Jr. (*pro hac vice*)
QUINN EMANUEL URQUHART &
SULLIVAN, LLP
51 Madison Avenue, 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10010
(212) 849-7000
stephenneuwirth@quinnemanuel.com
michaelcarlinsky@quinnemanuel.com
samirashid@quinnemanuel.com
richardvagas@quinnemanuel.com
bobbyvance@quinnemanuel.com

*Counsel for JBS USA Food Company and
JBS USA Food Company Holdings*

/s/ William L. Greene

William L. Greene (#0198730)
Peter J. Schwingler (#0388909)
Jon M. Woodruff (#0399453)
STINSON LEONARD STREET LLP
50 South Sixth Street, Suite 2600
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 335-1500
william.greene@stinson.com
peter.schwingler@stinson.com
john.woodruff@stinson.com

J. Nicci Warr (*pro hac vice*)
STINSON LEONARD STREET LLP
7700 Forsyth Blvd., Suite 1100
St. Louis, MO 63105
(314) 863-0800
nicci.warr@stinson.com

*Counsel for Seaboard Foods, LLC and
Seaboard Corporation*

/s/ John A. Cotter

John A. Cotter (#0134296)
John A. Kvinge (#0392303)
LARKIN HOFFMAN DALY &
LINDGREN LTD.
8300 Norman Center Drive, Suite 1000
Minneapolis, MN 55427-1060
(952) 835-3800
jcotter@larkinhoffman.com
jkvinge@larkinhoffman.com

Richard Parker (*pro hac vice*)
Josh Lipton (*pro hac vice*)
GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER, LLP
1050 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036-5306
(202) 955-8500
rparker@gibsondunn.com
jlipton@gibsondunn.com

Brian Robison (*pro hac vice*)
GIBSON, DUNN & CRUTCHER, LLP
2100 McKinney Avenue, Suite 1100
Dallas, TX 75201-6912
(214) 698-3370
brobison@gibsondunn.com

Counsel for Smithfield Foods, Inc.

/s/ Aaron Chapin

Aaron Chapin (#06292540)
HUSCH BLACKWELL LLP
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 2200
Chicago, IL 60606
(312) 655-1500
aaron.chapin@huschblackwell.com

Gene Summerlin (*pro hac vice*)
Marnie Jensen (*pro hac vice*)
Ryann Glenn (*pro hac vice*)
Kamron Hasan (*pro hac vice*)
Quinn Eaton (*pro hac vice*)
Sierra Faler (*pro hac vice*)
HUSCH BLACKWELL LLP
13330 California St., Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68154
(402) 964-5000
gene.summerlin@huschblackwell.com
marnie.jensen@huschblackwell.com
ryann.glenn@huschblackwell.com
kamron.hasan@huschblackwell.com
quinn.eaton@huschblackwell.com
sierra.faler@huschblackwell.com

Counsel for Triumph Foods, LLC

/s/ David P. Graham

David P. Graham (#0185462)
DYKEMA GOSSETT PLLC
4000 Wells Fargo Center
90 South Seventh Street
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(612) 486-1521
dgraham@dykema.com

Rachel J. Adcox (*pro hac vice*)
Tiffany Rider Rohrbaugh (*pro hac vice*)
AXINN, VELTROP &
HARKRIDER LLP
950 F Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 912-4700
radcox@axinn.com
trider@axinn.com

*Counsel for Tyson Foods, Inc., Tyson
Prepared Foods, Inc. and Tyson Fresh
Meats, Inc.*

/s/ Peter H. Walsh

Peter H. Walsh (#0388672)
HOGAN LOVELLS US LLP
80 South Eighth Street, Suite 1225
Minneapolis, MN 55402
T. (612) 402-3000
F. (612) 402-3001
peter.walsh@hoganlovells.com

William L. Monts (*pro hac vice*)
Justin W. Bernick (*pro hac vice*)
Jennifer A. Fleury (*pro hac vice*)
HOGAN LOVELLS US LLP
Columbia Square
555 Thirteenth Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 637-5600
william.monts@hoganlovells.com
justin.bernick@hoganlovells.com
jennifer.fleury@hoganlovells.com

Counsel for Agri Stats, Inc.